



# UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450  
[www.uspto.gov](http://www.uspto.gov)

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/731,079	12/09/2003	Douglas R. Fish	ROC920030190US1	3767

46797 7590 12/12/2007  
IBM CORPORATION, INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAW  
DEPT 917, BLDG. 006-1  
3605 HIGHWAY 52 NORTH  
ROCHESTER, MN 55901-7829

EXAMINER	
BELL, CORY C	

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
2164	

MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
12/12/2007	PAPER

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

---

Commissioner for Patents  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450  
[www.uspto.gov](http://www.uspto.gov)

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS  
AND INTERFERENCES**

**MAILED**

**DEC 12 2007**

**Technology Center 2100**

Application Number: 10/731,079  
Filing Date: December 09, 2003  
Appellant(s): FISH ET AL.

---

Randol W. Read  
For Appellant

**EXAMINER'S ANSWER**

This is in response to the appeal brief filed 9/28/2007 appealing from the Office action mailed 4/2/2007.

**(1) Real Party in Interest**

A statement identifying by name the real party in interest is contained in the brief.

**(2) Related Appeals and Interferences**

The examiner is not aware of any related appeals, interferences, or judicial proceedings which will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the pending appeal.

**(3) Status of Claims**

The statement of the status of claims contained in the brief is correct.

**(4) Status of Amendments After Final**

The appellant's statement of the status of amendments after final rejection contained in the brief is correct.

**(5) Summary of Claimed Subject Matter**

The summary of claimed subject matter contained in the brief is correct.

**(6) Grounds of Rejection to be Reviewed on Appeal**

The appellant's statement of the grounds of rejection to be reviewed on appeal is correct.

**(7) Claims Appendix**

The copy of the appealed claims contained in the Appendix to the brief is correct.

**(8) Evidence Relied Upon**

6519603

Bays

**(9) Grounds of Rejection**

The following ground(s) of rejection are applicable to the appealed claims:

Art Unit: 2164

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(a) the invention was known or used by others in this country, or patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country, before the invention thereof by the applicant for a patent.

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 1,2, 4 and 7-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) and 35 U.S.C (a) as being anticipated by US 6,519,603 known hereafter as Bays.

**Claim 1** is rejected for the following reasons:

1. A method for providing annotation information for a set of data, comprising: querying an annotation store to retrieve one or more annotation records, {Figure 1a items 25 and 20, Col 4 lines 25-31} each annotation record associated with a portion of the set of data {Col 2 lines 30-37} and having one or more annotation fields; wherein the set of data is a relational table containing query results {Col 2 lines 53-59} generating a linking value identifying the portion of the set of data associated with the annotation records; {Col 3 lines 48-53} consolidating data contained in the annotation fields; and returning an annotation data structure {Col 11 lines 22-24 teach consolidating the fields into a results set} comprising a field containing the linking value and a field containing the consolidated data. {all fields contain consolidated data, Col 3 lines 48-53 show that the annotations fields are accompanied by the linking value field as the annotation which are returned comprise pointers}

Art Unit: 2164

the set of data is a relational table containing query results; and the method further comprises joining the annotation data structure with the set of data using the generated linking value. {Col 6 lines 61-66 and col 4 lines 34-36, also see figure 2, it is inherent that the linking value is used to join the data}

**Claim 2** is rejected for the following reasons:

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising returning the set of data with the annotation data structure. {Col 4 lines 34-36}

**Claim 4** is rejected for the following reasons:

4. The method of claim 3, comprising joining the annotation data structure with the set of data prior to returning the annotation data structure. {Figure 1A shows that the integration engine 12 is before the api returns the data to the user 27}

**Claim 7** is rejected for the following reasons:

7. The method of claim 1, further comprising receiving a query to retrieve the annotation data, the query identifying the portion of the set of data associated with the annotation records. {Col 3 lines 59-76}

Art Unit: 2164

**Claim 8** is rejected for the following reasons:

8. The method of claim 1, further comprising: receiving a query to retrieve the set of data; and issuing the query against a data source separate from the annotation store to retrieve the set of data. {Figure 1A shows that the data sources are separate from the annotation store, col 6 line 61- col 7 line 8}

**Claim 9** is rejected for the following reasons:

See Claims 1, and 4 rejections, any data is user data using the broadest reasonable interpretation.

**Claim 10** is rejected for the following reasons:

See Claim 1 rejection.

**Claim 11** is rejected for the following reasons:

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the linking values are utilized in the joining. {Col 4 lines 34-43 to join the data with the annotation the link must inherently be used}

**Claim 12** is rejected for the following reasons:

See Claim 1 rejection.

**Claim 13** is rejected for the following reasons:

See Claim 2 rejection.

Art Unit: 2164

**Claim 14** is rejected for the following reasons:

See Claim 3 rejection.

**Claim 15** is rejected for the following reasons:

See Claim 7 rejection.

**Claim 16** is rejected for the following reasons:

See Claim 8 rejection.

**Claim 17** is rejected for the following reasons:

See Claim 1 rejection.

**Claim 18** is rejected for the following reasons:

See Claim 2 rejection.

**Claim 19** is rejected for the following reasons:

See Claim 8 rejection.

**Claim 20** is rejected for the following reasons:

See Claims 3 and 4 rejections.

Art Unit: 2164

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 5 and 6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bays in view of official notice.

**Claim 5 and 6** are rejected because:

Bays teaches a relation database and using linking values and annotating data at the instance row level(col 2 lines 20-26 and 30-38, col 5 line 23, ) However, bay fails to expressly disclose the use of primary key data. The examiner takes official notice that it would have been well known in the art at the time of the invention to include a simple or a composite primary key data in the link value. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to include the primary key data, as primary keys are how rows are differentiated in the relational database model.

**(10) Response to Argument**

**(11) Related Proceeding(s) Appendix**

For the above reasons, it is believed that the rejections should be sustained.

Appellant argument I:



In this case, *Bays* does not teach each and every element of the claims. For example, *Bays* does not teach or suggest "consolidating data contained in the annotation fields" and "returning an annotation data structure comprising a field containing the linking value and a field containing the consolidated data," as recited in independent claims 1, 12 and 17. As illustrated in Figures 4A-4B and described in paragraphs [0040-0042] of the present application, returning an annotation data structure (item 430) comprising generated linking values (items 426) and fields containing consolidated data (items 428), as claimed, allows annotations that would conventionally appear on multiple rows of data results to be consolidated into a single row of data results. For example, the two annotations included in the rows 424<sub>1</sub> and 424<sub>2</sub> shown in Figure 4A may be consolidated into a single field of row 428<sub>1</sub> shown in Figure 4B. In contrast, there is no teaching of consolidating annotations into one field in *Bays*, or any similar type of consolidation of annotations at all.

In the *Advisory Action* dated 6/27/2007, the Examiner appears to concede that *Bays* does not teach consolidated annotations returned in a field, stating "... if applicant intends consolidation to be used in this manner the applicant should amend the claims

to include consolidating the annotation information into a single field." Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 1, 12 and 17 recite "a field containing the consolidated data," clearly indicating a single field.

Appellant's argues a limitation narrower than that which is claim, misconstrues the examiners response in the advisory action, and fails to recognize that *Bays* teaches the limitation even if it were to be read as narrowly as Appellant argues.

First, there is a clear difference between "consolidating data contained in the annotation fields" "a field containing the consolidated data" and "consolidating annotations into one field" as the former could be interpreted that any of the annotation fields is a field containing consolidated data, as each is a field for which their data has been consolidated. This interpretation would not be valid for the latter. This was point made by the examiner in the

Art Unit: 2164

advisory action, and the examiner at no point stated that Bays failed to teach Appellant's assertion that the claim required consolidating the annotation data into one field, as Bays does teach Appellant's interpretation as follows.

First, it is importance to note that the term field is very nebulous, as its definition is very broad:

In an application context a field is a position on a form that is used to enter, view, update, or delete data. In a database context a field is the same as a column. Also see column. [orafaq.com/glossary/faqglosf.htm](http://orafaq.com/glossary/faqglosf.htm)

Specific item of data. A field is usually part of a record, which in turn is part of a file. Hutchinson Encyclopaedia

This is a designation for a group of data. For instance, a program that asks for your name keeps that data in a field, stored on a disk drive, in a file, within the file within a record. A field does not have any restrictions as to how large or small it can be. <http://www.csgnetwork.com/glossaryf.html>

A field is an area in a fixed or known location in a unit of data such as a record, message header, or computer instruction that has a purpose and usually a fixed size. In some contexts, a field can be subdivided into smaller fields. Here are some examples:

- 1) In a database table, a field is a data structure for a single piece of data. Fields are organized into records, which contain all the information within the table relevant to a specific entity. For example, in a table called *customer contact information*, *telephone number* would likely be a field in a row that would also contain other fields such as *street address* and *city*. The records make up the table rows and the fields make up the columns.
- 2) In a form that you fill out on a Web site, each box that asks you for information is a text entry field.
- 3) In the header of a variable-length transmission unit, a two-byte subfield in the header (which is really a field itself) could identify the length in bytes of the message. [http://searchoracle.techtarget.com/sDefinition/0,,sid41\\_gci213963,00.html](http://searchoracle.techtarget.com/sDefinition/0,,sid41_gci213963,00.html)

Given these definitions Bays teaches a field containing the consolidated data from the annotation fields, as follows:

First, looking at figure 2 items 77, 78, and 79 each of these elements individually and together as a whole teach a single field containing the consolidated data.

Art Unit: 2164

50

STATE	QUERY/BROWSE	USAGE: tax	
STATUS	RESERVE	UNITS	CERTA
	>300	Bcf	>70
PRASAL	770	Bcf	765

DATE: 05-Apr-97  
 AUTHOR: R.E. Sarno  
 CONTEXT: Reservoir Eng  
 RES. ENGINEER: A.H. Engle  
 SIMULATION: Fecsub, Model  
 SOIL REFERENCE: MS  
 SM11576  
 SIMULATION DATE: 23-Mar-97  
 USAGE: tax purposes  
 USAGE AUTHORIZER:  
 R. A. Hager  
 USAGE COMMENT: Current best  
 estimate based on simulation  
 figures for initial 2 wells.

77

78

79

**FIG. 2**

Art Unit: 2164

This annotation structure is defined in Col 9 lines 14-30:

“For illustration purposes, the annotation structure for cell 75 includes three categories: The first category 77 represents the annotation author's category, and provides information (in the form of annotations), for instance, about the author's name, the context or author's discipline, and the entry date. The second category 78 represents the simulation category, and provides information about the person who ran the simulation, e.g. reservoir engineer's name, the type of oil well simulation, the location of the simulation reference files, and the simulation date. The third category 79 represents the usage category, and provides information about the usage of data in cell 75 that can be used for tax purposes, the person who authorized this use of the data, and further comments about the use.”

And Col 2 lines 53-61 explicitly defines that the annotations are fields.

“The structure is comprised of labeled categories, to aid semantic interpretation. The annotation structure could be as simple as a "header" category containing attributes (or fields) about whom and when the person or application wrote the annotation, together with a "business meaning" category containing a single "Comment" field for a textual description of the data item being annotated. In this example, the title of the latter category, "business meaning" can aid in the interpretation of the "Comment" field. An annotation structure may be more complicated than the one illustrated above and contain many categories, each of which contains a number of attributes.”

Thus, Days teaches the annotation fields consolidated into a single field in a number of manners:

by consolidation of the the fields into a single area for viewing on a display(as shown in figure 2, element 77, 78, and 78, each separated by a line and the box around all 3 elements);

consolidation of the the fields into a single data structure (the annotation structure is a collection of categories, which are a collection of annotation fields). It is also important to note that if

Appellant's interpretation that a field containing data can only be interpreted to mean a single field have data consolidated into should intern make same true for the language “the annotation data stucture... include[ing]” mulitiple fields;

Art Unit: 2164

or consolidation of the the fields into a single column(as shown in figure 2 elements 77, 78, and 79 are in a single column). Col 1 lines 54-56 also teaches storing annotations in the structured form. "Annotations are provided for selected database subdivisions and are converted to a structured form and stored in that form along with connections to corresponding subdivisions."

Thus, although it was not nescicary for Bays to teach Appellant's overly narrow interpriation it is none the less taught.

Appellant argument II:

Further, Applicants respectfully submit that *Bays* does not teach or suggest generating a linking value identifying the portion of the set of data associated with the annotation records, and joining the annotation data structure with the set of data using the generated linking value, as recited in independent claims 1, 12 and 17.

In the *Final Office Action* dated 4/2/2007, the Examiner argues that "generating a linking value identifying the portion of the set of data associated with the annotation records" is disclosed by *Bays*, Col. 3, Lines 48-53, which states:

For annotation entry, an annotatable data item is chosen (e.g. a 5th cell in column y of spreadsheet z) and an annotation is entered and stored. The annotation is associated with the annotatable data item at the time of entry by including pointer information to the annotatable data item with the annotation.

Here, the Examiner argues that the recited "linking value" is disclosed by the "pointer information" described in *Bays*. Applicants respectfully point out that, as described in the above citation, *Bays* teaches that the pointer information is included in the annotation "*at the time of entry*" of the annotation. Thus, *Bays* does not teach generating a linking value for annotation records that are retrieved by querying an annotation store, as recited in the present claims.

Accordingly, Applicants submit claims 1, 12 and 17, as well as their dependents, are allowable and respectfully request withdrawal of these rejections.

Art Unit: 2164

Google defines generate as:

- bring into existence; "The new manager generated a lot of problems"; "The computer bug generated chaos in the office"

To included pointer information means that the pointer information must have been brought into existence and was therefore by definition generated. Thus, the Appellant's assertions are not correct.

Appellant's third argument, that the 103 rejections were improper, relies on the correctness of arguments I and II. As these arguments were not correct, Appellant's third argument is also incorrect.

Respectfully submitted,

Cory Bell



Conferees:

Charles Rones



CHARLES RONES  
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER



Tim Vo

TIM VO  
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER  
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2100